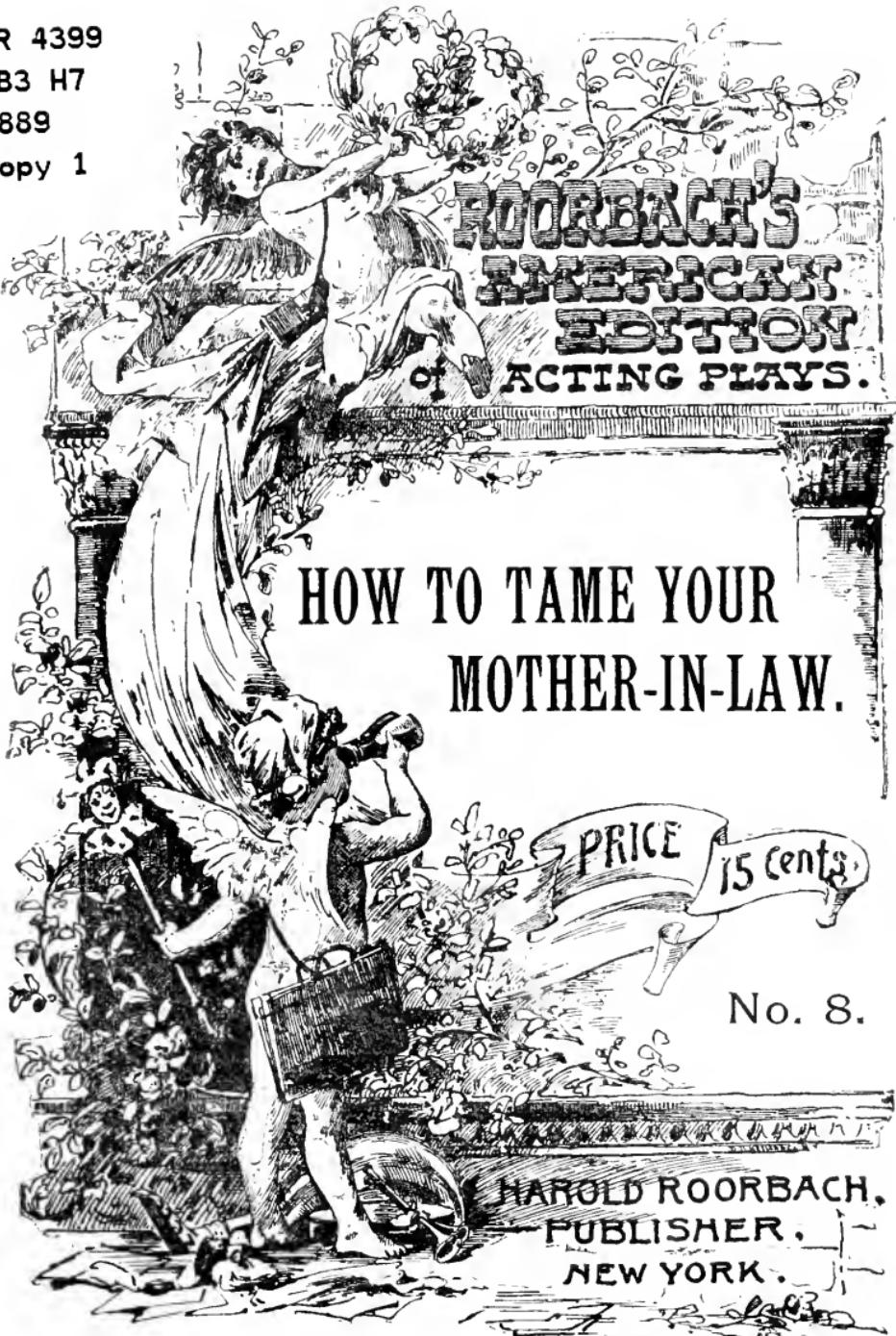


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# HOW TO TAME YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW

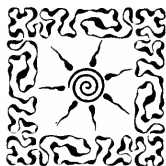
A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY

HENRY J. BYRON

NEW AMERICAN EDITION, CORRECTLY REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZED ACTING EDITION, WITH THE ORIGINAL CAST OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAM OF THE STAGE SETTING, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC., AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

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8-5252



# How to Tame Your Mother-in-law.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

*First performed at the Strand Theatre, London, under the management of Mrs. Swanborough, on Monday, May 30th, 1864.*

SAMSON WHIFFLES ( <i>a tea dealer</i> ).....	Mr. H. J. Turner.
TOMPKINS ( <i>his shop boy</i> ).....	Mr. L. Fredericks.
MR. HUNX ( <i>a landlord</i> ).....	Mr. Collier.
MR. TIMOTHY SPANGLE ( <i>an actor</i> ) .....	Mr. T. Thorne.
MRS. WHIFFLES ( <i>Samson's better-half</i> ).....	Miss E. Johnstone.
MRS. INCUBUS ( <i>Samson's mother-in-law</i> ).....	Mrs. Manders.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES.

## SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

SAMSON WHIFFLES, a tea-dealer, is rejoiced to see his wife depart on a visit to her mother; but immediately after her departure, he is horrified at learning that his dreadful mother-in-law, MRS. INCUBUS, is about to visit his house. In the midst of his despair, he is surprised at the entrance of his old friend TIMOTHY SPANGLE, a travelling actor, just returned from an unprofitable trip on the road and in debt to MR. HUNX, the landlord of his hotel. As SAMSON lacks courage to get rid of his unwelcome mother-in-law, SPANGLE volunteers to deal with the old lady so effectually that she will gladly shorten her stay. MRS. INCUBUS duly arrives and is cordially received by Samson, but he is ostensibly forced at once to depart on pressing business, leaving the field clear for SPANGLE. The latter then enters disguised as a smuggler, and beguiles MRS. INCUBUS into purchasing, at a ruinously low price, what she supposes to be some smuggled silk. The "smuggler" having retired, MRS. INCUBUS goes off to have a look at the larder, leaving her bonnet and shawl on a chair. During her absence, MRS. WHIFFLES returns to find her lord absent, presumably enjoying himself; and, discovering the bonnet and shawl, flounces out to procure a divorce from the wretch. MRS. INCUBUS then comes back, disgusted at the painful lack of provender in the house, and is extremely disconcerted by the ravings of SPANGLE, this

time disguised as a costermonger. WHIFFLES is then brought in deplorably drunk, and realizing that his condition is not *comme il faut*, conceals himself in the preserve closet just as his mother-in-law re-enters ready to shake the dust of the premises from her feet. But in the act of departure, she is met by SPANGLE, now got up as a policeman, charged with a breach of the revenue laws, and directed to retire to her room while he fetches a cab in which to convey her to prison. While pretending to call the cab, the policeman is met by the irate Mr. HUNX, in anxious search of SPANGLE and his money. The "policeman" now tells HUNX that the absconding debtor is at that very moment in the next room, disguised as a woman in order to effect his escape, and advises HUNX to collar his victim at once, promising to be at hand in case of need. Immediately on MRS. INCUBUS' reappearance, she is seized by HUNX, but rescued by MRS. WHIFFLES, who comes in opportunely. In the course of the uproar, WHIFFLES, smeared with preserves, emerges from his place of concealment, declares his independence of petticoat government, and asserts his domestic authority. SPANGLE then comes forward and is instantly recognized by HUNX, but silences the latter by referring to his conduct at a ball on the previous night. MRS. INCUBUS is now thoroughly subdued, and SPANGLE, though he declines to enter into any explanations, offers to set forth in a practical manner, as frequently as required, the whole art of "HOW TO TAME YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW."

### COSTUMES.

SAMSON.—Business suit; hat.

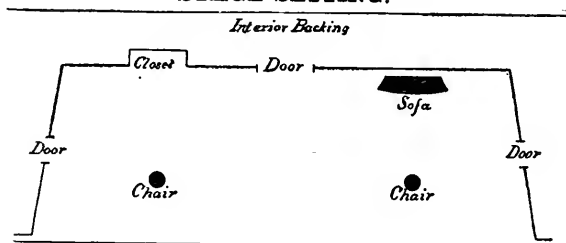
TOMPKINS.—Ordinary waistcoat and trousers; calico shirt, without collar; apron.

Mr. HUNX.—Business suit; hat.

SPANGLE.—*1st dress*; business suit, hat and cane. *2d dress*; burlesque smuggler's disguise. *3d dress*; costermonger's costume. *4th dress*; policeman's uniform, shield and club.

MRS. WHIFFLES } —Ordinary walking dresses, bonnets and shawls.  
MRS. INCUBUS. }

### STAGE SETTING.



SCENE.—Plain chamber in 3 G., backed with interior backing in 4 G. Doors R., L., and C. Closet R. C. in flat. Sofa up L. Chairs R. C. and L. C.

**PROPERTIES.**

Labels and boxes. Bell behind stage. Candles, bar of soap, and preserves in closet, R. C. Letter in brown envelope for TOMPKINS. Money, watch and flask for WHIFFLES. Two handkerchiefs (one very ragged), short pipe, bottle, and parcel for SPANGLE. Money and flask in satchel for MRS. INCUBUS.

•

**STAGE DIRECTIONS.**

The player is supposed to face the audience. R. means right; L., left; C., center; R. C., right of center; L. C., left of center; 1 E., first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G., first, second or third grooves. UP STAGE, toward the back; DOWN STAGE, toward the footlights.

R.                      R. C.                      C.                      L. C.                      L.

NOTE.—The text of this play is correctly reprinted from the original authorized acting edition, without change. The introductory matter has been carefully prepared by an expert, and is the only part of this book protected by copyright.





## How to Tame Your Mother-in-Law.

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**SCENE**—*Parlor behind a little grocer's shop—Doors, R., L., R. C. and into shop, C.*

*TOMPKINS pasting labels on boxes.*

**Tom.** "Mrs. Whiffles, passenger to Frumpington." That's all right : and so missus is going out of town : she says it's for the benefit of her health. I'm sure it will be for the benefit of my health, and master's too—poor fellow. I never knew such a tartar as missis, never ! Talk of Timour, the Tartar, as I see last boxing night ! He is a regular lamb in armor, compared to Mrs. Whiffles. I hope she won't hurry back on *our* account ; master an' me can do without her, 'specially me. Here she comes, so as music 'ath power to sooth the savage breast, why—— (*arranges boxes—sings*) "I'm afloat, I'm afloat——"

**Enter MRS. WHIFFLES, R.—*paces the stage.***

**Mrs. W.** You're afloat indeed—you're a fool.

**Tom.** Thankee, mum.

**Mrs. W.** Don't answer—I hate boys that answer.

**Tom.** I don't answer, mum, at least master said so after he'd tried me a week.

**Mrs. W.** Hold your tongue, sir, and leave the drawing-room.

**Tom.** (*aside*) He, he, he ! calls the little parlor behind the shop, a droring-room ! I'm a going, mum. (*exit door, C.*)

**Mrs. W.** Yes, Mr. Sampson Whiffles your patient wife can bear a great deal, but there *are* bounds, which even the most trusting woman—but what's the use of complaining ? What are wives but beasts of burden—camels ? But the last straw breaks the camel's back, and I have had the last straw. My dear old darling of a mamma, the kindest, gentlest, best of mothers and mothers-in-law, proposes to come and stay on a visit, and Mr. Whiffles objects, positively grumbles ! But I'll be even with my

gentleman—I'll go and see her, and not come back till he sends for me, which he'll be too glad to do, in a couple of days. When I'm away, he'll soon find what a treasure I am.

**Enter WHIFFLES, C. door from shop.**

**Whif.** My dear, have you any idea—

**Mrs. W.** No, I haven't !

**Whif.** Hem ! (*aside*) Weather-glass points to stormy. (*aloud*) Do you know, my dear, if we are out of soap ?

**Mrs. W.** Oh, drop the shop, I'm sick of it !

**Whif.** If I drop the shop, my dear, the shop will very soon drop me. That's my reason for living on the ground floor instead of upstairs ; I didn't want to be above my business—d'ye see ? That's not so bad.

**Mrs. W.** Well, as you don't wish to have ma here—

**Whif.** But when mothers-in-law come to live with their daughters, they've a knack of—of—of—not going away again ; however, if you insist—

**Mrs. W.** Oh, no, sir, my mamma is too proud to force her presence upon any one—however, I am going to see her ; I have no doubt you will survive my absence. Plenty of your lady customers, to whom you are so polite, will be ready to sympathize with you in your lonely condition—I don't suppose you'll miss me (*cries*)

**Whif.** (*aside*) Weather, glass points to much rain. My dear, I hope you'll enjoy yourself, and bring back—

**Mrs. W.** Mamma ?

**Whif.** No ; a better temper.

**Mrs. W.** I, a better temper ? Why, you good-for-nothing, ugly, unkind little tyrant—I've the best temper in the world.

**Whif.** Very likely ; but you're a perfect mistress in the art of disguising it ! Well, Tompkins shall fetch a cab. (*calls*) Tompkins !

**Enter TOMPKINS, C.**

Tompkins !

**Tom.** Yes sir.

**Whif.** Go and fetch a cab.

**Tom.** I've got one, sir ! Such a hoss—a gray mare—riglar racer—rattle you down to the station in no time, mum.

**Mrs. W.** (*aside*) I do believe they're glad to get rid of me. (*aloud*) Carry my boxes to the cab.

**Tom.** Yes'm, with the very greatest pleasure. (*aside*) Hooray, hooray, missis is a going ! (*exit with boxes, C.*)

**Mrs. W.** And now, good morning !

**Whif.** Good morning, my dear. What, ain't you agoing to—eh ? (*indicating a desire to be saluted*)

**Mrs. W.** (*severely*) Sampson Whiffles, if you had fifty mothers,

and they wanted to come and stay with you, I should smile upon you and say "bring 'em."

**Whif.** I don't know where you'd put 'em though. One salute.

**Mrs. W.** No, sir ! When I return, may you be more alive to the treasure you possess. Oh, what did I ever marry you for !

(*exit, C.*)

**Whif.** Sampson Whiffles, when you led to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Angelica Incubus, you considered yourself the happiest fellow in world. Six weeks after that auspicious event, you came to the conclusion that there wasn't a more miserable devil breathing. Here have I been married a year and a half, and I can hardly believe it to be less than twenty years. I don't believe that I'm thirty-two ; I'm firmly convinced I'm at least sixty. I'm prematurely old ; I feel it—my hair's turning gray—I'm getting weak in the knees—in fact, I'm wretched, and yet my wife is a charming woman. Ah, there's no mistake about that ; everybody said so before we were married, and of course it must be so ; but all I know is, if I get a chance of being married again, I shall fix my affections on anything but a charming woman—I shall select a regular sour piece of goods, and with the less teeth the better ; but no more of your charming women for Sampson Whiffles.

**Enter TOMPKINS, C., with letter in brown envelope.**

**Tom.** Letter, sir.

**Whif.** Is there ?

**Tom.** Yes, sir, and there's some'at else.

**Whif.** What ?

**Tom.** There's twopence to pay for it.

**Whif.** (*gives money*) What impudence ! (*TOMPKINS goes off, door, C.*) Who's this from ? I should like to know—the post mark says Fru—— Oh, lord ! It's a letter from my mother-in-law—Angelica's ma. Ha, ha ! (*opens letter*) Charming old lady, she is. The late Mr. Incubus died in a lunatic asylum—don't wonder at it—I think his daughter is making out *my* ticket for Hanwell ; but she don't do it. No, I'll die sane if I go mad in the attempt ! (*reads—gets excited—falls into chair*) Tompkins ! Tompkins ! (*jumping up*) Tompkins !

**Enter TOMPKINS, C.,—WHIFFLES seizes him.**

**Whif.** Mistaken infant—infinitesimal—homœopathic dose of humanity, why were you ever born ?

**Tom.** Lord, master, have you got the hydro-for-beer ?

**Whif.** Why—why did you bring me this letter ? Instrument of torture, speak ! Had you annihilated me—crunched—smashed—squashed me ! Oh, misery ! (*falls into a chair*)

**Tom.** What's the matter, sir ? Has a customer bolted ? He's got delirium tremendous.

**Whif.** So this dreadful woman is coming on a visit, is she ? She's coming to fasten herself like a remorseless leech upon her son and daughter, eh ? To make my life more miserable—my Angelica more suspicious—my home more like a wasp's nest than it ever was, is she ? What am I to do ? I haven't a soul to help me,—not one—not one !

**Exit** TOMPKINS, C.

**Span.** (*in shop—sings*) "When the heart of a man is oppressed."

**Whif.** Ha, that voice, that toone—'tis he !

**Enter** SPANGLE, C.,—*melodramatic start.*

**Span.** What, my Whiffles—companion of childhood—friend of my boyhood—confidant of my riper years ; ha, ha ! embrace me.

(*embrace*)

**Whif.** What on earth brings you to town ? I thought you were engaged for six months at the Theatre Royal, Little Snodgrass.

**Span.** Whiffles, the T. R. Little Snodgrass is a swindle—the company invisible—the manager a myth, and the audiences—such audiences, Whiffles—three old women and a baby in the pit two orders in the boxes, and a butcher boy and woman, with nuts, in the gallery—that's a crowded house. Who could spout Shakespeare to such a select few ? not Timothy Spangle. No, I contented myself with spouting my chronometer, and with a heavy sigh and a light carpet bag, I bade adieu to Little Snodgrass and the Little Snodgrassians.

**Whif.** No doubt leaving them inconsolable at your departure.

**Span.** Only one person regretted that, I believe.

**Whif.** Who was that ?

**Span.** My landlord ; the confiding individual, after swindling me in every way he could for six weeks, suddenly grew nervous for the rent and seized my wardrobe.

**Whif.** Your wardrobe ?

**Span.** Yes, a pair of old tights, two dilapidated russet boots and a shoe horn. I saw the old rascal at a fancy ball last night, dancing away with a *debardeur* at the "Thistle and Broomstick." But I say, old fellow, you don't look altogether lively—what's the matter ? Don't married life agree with you ?

**Whif.** Oh, yes, I'm lively—very lively.

**Span.** Are you ? Well, p'raps you are ; but your liveliness is exactly like my misery. Come, unbosom yourself—what's the matter, business shaky ?

**Whif.** Firm as ever—increasing.

**Span.** Lungs sound ?

**Whif.** Listen.

(*prepares to shout*)

**Span.** Thankee, don't exert yourself. Ah, I see ! Mrs. Whiffles and you don't altogether hit it ; or rather you do hit it and have a fight now and then.

**Whif.** No jokes on such a subject.

**Span.** No, it's no laughing matter. Ah, my boy, you were happy when we used to play Macbeth together in the loft, don't you remember ? " Lay on Macduff and damn'd be he who first cries ' hold, enough ! ' " (*crosses to R.*) Thrilling, wasn't it ?

**Whif.** I beg to say I've had quite enough, I'm out of—

**Span.** What—candles ? Said so ; been paying your taxes—found the price of brooms risen, eh ? Chicory dearer ? Rise in sand, eh ? You look as if you'd got a man in possession.

**Whif.** I shall have a woman in possession soon. The fact is, I've got a sword hanging over my head.

**Span.** (*looking up*) Where ?

**Whif.** Bother ! Have you never heard of Damocles ?

**Span.** D—n Damocles ! go on !

**Whif.** Timothy, did you ever have a mother-in-law ?

**Span.** No ; but I've got a cousin-german.

**Whif.** Of course not ; you're a bachelor. Well, my wife you know, is a charming person !

**Span.** Ah ! a splendid woman—expansive—plenty of her !

**Whif.** But, unfortunately, she's a leetle—just a leetle warm-tempered—breaks all the furniture twice a week, likes to have her own way, you know, and, I'm sadly afraid that by the time she's sixty—

**Span.** She'll be a regular tommyhawk—a downright old she bear—gray, but grizzly.

**Whif.** She's gone on a visit.

**Span.** Hooray ! then, my boy, we'll have a regular holiday-time of it. I've nothing to do—I'll stop with you till she returns. I'll do anything to make myself useful ; crush the lump, pick the flies out of the treacle—anything !

**Whif.** Thankee ; but, unfortunately, her dear mamma, her dear mamma, I say—

**Span.** Yes, she'll be *dear* to you, I dare say ; you wouldn't mind her being lost to sight—to memory dear.

**Whif.** This awful old woman intends quartering herself.—

**Span.** Yes, her elderly and snuffy self—

**Whif.** Exactly ; on me. Now, when once she enters these doors, adieu comfort, authority, self-respect, peaceful hours—

**Span.** British brandy !

**Whif.** Everything an Englishman prizes. She'll put my wife up to all sorts of rebellious tricks, and as soon as she arrives, she'll drive me to a wat'ry grave.

**Span.** Then as soon as she arrives, I should drive her to the Waterloo Station, and pack her home again. What, Sampson

Whiffles, do you intend to give up your home to a disagreeable, sponging old woman, who can afford to keep away, but who, once admitted, will be like blackbeetles—impossible to get rid of—don't say you do, for I don't believe you. I know that beneath those Nankeen trousers—I mean under that elaborately spotted waistcoat—beats a heart as brave as Cæsar's, and as undaunted as Coriolanus's. Forget not, my boyhood's friend and pitcher, that the blood of all the Whiffleses darts through my Sampson's veins; that a long and noble line of ancestry looks down upon you, exclaiming with universal voice, "Sampson Whiffles, remember your family, pack off your mother-in-law; or give in, succumb, immolate yourself beneath Mrs. Juggernaut Incubus, deliver up your prerogative, surrender your house and authority, and dwindle gradually into a miserable henpeck'd, mother-in-law-mangled, trick'd, trodden down, trampled on, little tea-dealer, with a heart the size of a penn'orth of blue, and no more spirit than a short six." (*crosses L.*)

**Whif.** What you say's all very true, Tim; but, somehow, since I've been married, I've lost all my courage—I've grown, as nervous as a kitten. I haven't the pluck to order off mother-in-law; I—

**Span.** You haven't! Who said you had? Of course not, I'll do the thing for you, you shan't appear at all in the business; I alone, with bended bow and "quiver full of arrows"—no, I mean my carpet-bag full of properties—will undertake to eradicate this domestic plague, and send her back to her souchong and scandal at Frumpington quicker than ever she came away.

**Whif.** No violence, Tim.

**Span.** Violence! The man who would raise a finger against a defenceless woman—

**Whif.** Just so, that'll do, but how will you manage?

**Span.** In my carpet bag I managed to conceal from the wary eyes of my landlord, Mr. Hunx, a few things, wigs, etc.; with the aid of these, I'll amuse Mrs. Inkybus during your absence. You'll have pressing business out, of course, and—ha, ha, ha!—glorious! by the time you return, put me down as pantomime super if Mrs. I. isn't cured forever of her son-in-law's oppressive tendencies.

**Whif.** If she is, Spangle, you shall have—

**Span.** What?

**Whif.** My blessing.

**Span.** Oh! thank'ee.

**Enter TOMPKINS, C., from shop.**

**Tom.** Please, sir, 'ere's a old lady inquiring for you.

**Whif.** Oh, lor! (*falls into SPANGLE'S arms.*)

**Tom.** The cabman's a follerin' of her, and a blackguarding of her, and a callin' of her names.

**Whif.** Oh, lor !

**Span.** Don't be a fool, man, summon up the courage of a tea-dealer and a gentleman, and meet your dear mamma-in-law like a man.

**Mrs. I.** (*without*) I tell you I won't give you a farthing more, so be off, you impertinent fellow !

**Whif.** You won't desert me, Spangle ?

**Span.** Desert you ? hear me swear ? (*kneels on pocket-handkerchief*)

**Whif.** No, no, don't swear, it agitates me. Do I look pallid ?

**Span.** Rubicund as pickle cabbage, my boy.

**Whif.** Go along then.

**Span.** Sustain your stamina, put a bold face on it, rely on the companion of your childhood.

My carpet bag's contents must gain the day,

My soul's in arms and eager for the fray.

Ha, ha, ha ! **Exit,** *melo-dramatically, R.*

**Tom.** (*imitates him*) Ha, ha, ha ! (*goes off, shop door*)

**Whif.** Now ! Sampson Whiffles, be a man, be a man. Now for the detestable old fiend in female form.

**Enter** MRS. INCUBUS, C.

(*affectionately*) My darling mother-in-law, delighted to see you. (*embrace*) bless me, how well you look. Why you don't look a day over five-and-thirty, I declare. How are you ?

**Mrs. I.** I'm in an ill temper.

**Whif.** How extraordinary !

**Mrs. I.** I've been imposed upon, Sampson.

**Whif.** (*aside*) She's heard all.

**Mrs. I.** By that cabman—the ruffian ! but you're all alike, you men, you all deceive and cheat us poor, confiding, weak women. Ah ! I wish my poor husband was alive.

**Whif.** (*aside*) Lucky man.

**Mrs. I.** What did you say ?

**Whif.** I said you were unlucky, ma'am.

**Mrs. I.** Of course I am ; don't want any jackanapes to tell me that. But where's Angelliky ?

**Whif.** Who, mother-in-law ?

**Mrs. I.** Angelliky !

**Whif.** Ah ! Angelica !

**Mrs. I.** Of course—are you deaf, or drunk ? why isn't she here to receive her ma ? I'm afraid she's as bad as you are, Sampson, and has almost forgotten her affectionate mother. (*whimpers*)

**Whif.** (*aside*) I never *did* commit murder, but—(*aloud*) the fact is, mother-in-law dear——

**Mrs. I.** Ha ! all children are alike now-a-days—well, well, I

shan't trouble you much longer. (WHIFFLES *phantomimes thanks*) I'm a martyr to lumbager, Sampson—I 'as it in my 'ed, and in my harms, and in my back especial—nothing won't cure it, but a wee drop of sherry, took medicinal, purely medicinal.

**Whif.** Ah! of course—I'm very sorry that Angelica took the keys with her.

**Mrs. I.** Don't trouble yourself. I 'as the attack so often, that I find it convenient to carry a little bottle with me. (*pulls out pint black bottle and imbibes*)

**Whif.** (*writhing in agony*) Oh, bless me! oh dear!

**Mrs. I.** What's the matter?

**Whif.** Oh! the lumbago! oh my back, oh! oh!

**Mrs. I.** Never knew it was catching.

**Whif.** Oh, yes, it's dreadful! give me some of your physic, I don't like it, but it'll do me good. (*seizes bottle and drinks*) I'm much better now.

**Mrs. I.** Oh, it's a wonderful remedy, took medicinal.

**Whif.** Oh! I've got it again! (*takes bottle again—pulls out watch*) Good gracious!

**Mrs. I.** What's the matter?

**Whif.** Lord bless us! ten o'clock, I must be off.

**Mrs. I.** Off!

**Whif.** Yes, didn't I tell you? Why, mother-in-law, I'm sorry to say that I'm obliged to go to Westminster—I'm on a jury and must go.

**Mrs. I.** You shan't!

**Whif.** Public justice—

**Mrs. I.** What's public justice to your mother-in-law, come all the way from Frumpington, to see her dear children?

**Whif.** I'm really sorry—but really I must go—perhaps—I say *perhaps*, you wouldn't object to mind the shop during my absence—my boy's young and prigs the currants.

**Mrs. I.** Mind the shop? a mother-in-law mind the shop! Why ain't there an earthquake?

**Whif.** So good-bye! good-bye! (*going—aside*) I'll go and have a consol at the "Pig and Whistle," in the court. He, he, he! I wouldn't be in mother-in-law's shoes for a trifle. (*aloud*) Oh! mother-in-law if the water rate calls, tell him I'm out, and shan't be home for a month. (*going*) Good-bye, mother-in-law. (*returns*) Oh, if Mrs. Haggle comes for three-and-eight-penny tea, give her two-and-nine—she never pays till she is made.

**Exit C. door.**

**Mrs. I.** (*sits*) Oh, deary me! why did I come on this unlucky journey—all to see a ungrateful darter as *is* out, and a vagabone of a son-in-law as *goes* out, when I might a stayed at home and been as comfortable as it's possible for a lumbagerfied creetur' to be. I was differently treated, when my good man was alive.

I misses him continually ; it's true I was always wishing him to go, but somehow, when he goed, I felt as though I was the lonest and flornest and forsakenest woman in Christendom. Weil, never mind, as my poor husband used to say—it's a walley of tears—and so it is—a world of lonelines and lumbager.

**Enter** SPANGLE R., *as a melodramatic smuggler—burlesque melodrama—noiselessly, and claps* MRS. INCUBUS *on shoulder—she shrieks.*

**Span.** Ha ! ha ! ha !

**Mrs. I.** Murder !

**Span.** Another word, and your brains bespatter that wall—one ejaculation, be it but "Oh, lawks !" and that Kidderminster carpet soaks up your best heart's blood—the slightest movement, even the uncontrollable wink of an eye, seals your dreadful doom ! Ha, ha !

**Mrs. I.** (*aside*) Ah, the garrotting ruffian ! Where's the police.

**Span.** What's that ? Police ! Name again the wretched myrmidons of a despotic and tyrannous government, and these walls resound to your closing squeals !

**Mrs. I.** Oh, lor !

**Span.** But I waste time—I am a fool. Madam, pardon me, you see before you a nobleman.

**Mrs. I.** Do I ?—where ?

**Span.** Here—in this wasted form, this sodden eye, these quivering limbs. I, madam, I am a nobleman—the Lord Mountapleblossom.

**Mrs. I.** The Lord Mount—

**Span.** Hush ! would you see me a gibbeted traitor on the fatal tree, or a wriggling corse at your feet ? That dreadful name, even whispered, is sufficient to raise a troop of harpies round their victim. Pity me ! 'tis years since I have tasted food. Madam, pity me—I—I am starving.

**Mrs. I.** What am I to do ? Oh, dear !

**Span.** Why was I ever born, madam ? Madam, I am of ancient lineage—noble family—tip-top birth. But a ruffianly steward sent me away when young, and now enjoys the title and estates, which of right belong to this shrunk shadow. What wonder then that, like a maniac, I roam the wide and wretched world, an outcast, and earning a bare subsistence by selling winkles. (*calls hoarsely*) Winkles ! here ye are ! wink, wink, wink !

**Mrs. I.** Poor young man ! (*aside*) A nobleman sell winkles—'orrible !

**Span.** But I'm not selling winkles now, lady—no, no, I have done with them, and forever ; but their wretched shells are ever

before me, their worm-like form forever haunts me, and their odor, when too long kept, still hangs around me. Now, madam, I am—I am——

**Mrs. I.** What—what ?

**Span.** Hush ! a smuggler. Shriek not, for your life ! without you'd condemn me for life to a solitary cell and spiders, beneath the lofty walls of frowning Newgate. Here, (*unfolds parcel*) here I have—start not—a silk dress—smuggled, smuggled (*aside*) from Spitalfields—for ten shillings—hush ! its value is eight guineas ; but hunger knows not haggling—for half that noble coin yeceapt a sov., 'tis yours.

**Mrs. I.** Ten shilling for that splendid silk ? cheap as dirt.

**Span.** Lucre is filthy, but it gets us grub.

**Mrs. I.** Oh ! Mr. Smuggler—I mean Mr.——no, Lord Winkle—no, I mean,—here's the ten shillings and——

**Span.** (*kneeling*) Bright seraph !——

**Mrs. I.** Go along, I ain't a syrup.

**Span.** Beauteous being—my thanks, my heartfelt thanks, accept 'em ; this kindness overpowers me ; (*pulls out ragged handkerchief*) but no, I will not weep, no ! 'tis unmanly. Oh ! lady—beauteous lady, I'm in love.

**Mrs. I.** Poor young man !

**Span.** 'Tis years since the unhappy Mountappleblossom has heard soft words of pity, (*in tears*) they overpower him ; but a truce with woman's tears—yes, lady, and she I love spurns me, she knows not my real condition—she despises the ragged out-cast, and I have but one consolation.

**Mrs. I.** What's that ?

**Span.** Look here—brandy ! beautiful brandy ; brandy that has not paid one farthing duty to Government ! No, no ! See lady, 'tis yours ; and when you have a touch of rheumatism, take first a glass of this, and think at the same time of the poor heart-broken smuggler, who, crushed—despised—trampled on—trodden under foot—lives but for revenge ! revenge !

**Exit** *melodramatically*, R.

**Mrs. I.** Misfortune's turned that young man's brain. However, the silk's cheap ; and as to its being smuggled, Government won't feel it, I dare say. I'll go and have a look at what's in the larder.

**Exit** L., *leaves bonnet and cloak on chair.*

**Enter** MRS. WHIFFLES, *from shop.*

**Mrs. W.** So, so, no one about—Tompkins master of the shop, and Mr. Whiffles out enjoying himself, I've no doubt. The monster, to think of eating and drinking in the absence of his wife ; but he little thinks that I've returned, and am hovering around the enemy like the fellow in the play ; he thinks I'm at Frumington by this time, the heartless wretch ! (*sits on bon-*

*net*) What's this? am I awake? a woman's bonnet and shawl and not mine! Oh! what's to become of me?—And he really is false to me; I, who have been such a fond, patient, gentle wife to him; but I'll not submit tamely as I always have done. No! I'll show him I'm not the foolish, weak creature he thinks me; I'll be divorced from the wretch! You can get one for a trifle. No, I won't; I'll go to my ma, I'll pour my griefs into her ear. Ah! the wicked, wicked wretch!

**Exit, sobbing, R.**

**Enter MRS. INCUBUS, L.**

**Mrs. I.** There's nothing at all in the larder, but some mint sauce, and a bit of beef suet; Tompkins and I can't make a dinner off that.

**Enter TOMPKINS from shop,**

What's your name?

**Tom.** My name is Tompkins, "on the Grapplin 'ills."

**Mrs. I.** None of your low poetry, I 'ate it; Tompkins, I want you to get me a chop.

**Tom.** A chop? (*shop bell*) Shop!

**Exit C. quick**

**Mrs. I.** Ugh! The 'orrid creature!

**Enter SPANGLE, as a costermonger, with short pipe, black eye.**

**Span.** Well! this here's a werry pooty conducted sort of a 'stablishment, this is! A werry pooty sort of a house to call after a great battle. Hinkermann 'ouse—Hinkermann 'ouse indeed! It's a Hinkermann bad shop at all events. "'Arf a hounce of bird's hi," ses I. "Haltogether hout o'bird's hi," ses he. "'Arf a hounce o' hanythink you 'as," ses I. "Haltogether hout o' heverythink," ses he. "You're the proprietor of the shop?" ses I. "You're hout," ses he. "Where his the proprietor?" ses I. "He's hout," ses he. "Where's the proprietress?" ses I. "She's hout as well," ses he. "Well if they're hall hout," ses I, "just step into the parlor and give us a light to this pipe by the fire." "The fire's hout too," ses he. "Well," ses I, "if heverythink's hout, what d'ye call this Hinkermann 'ouse for?" What do you say, old gal?

**Mrs. I.** What a 'orrid wretch. Oh! I wish I was back home.—catch me visiting my darter again in a hurry!

**Span.** Heverybody knows me—I don't hide my 'ed under no bushel, I don't put my beak into no sand like the pellikian of the deserts! Heverybody knows my sentiments. I'm for wote by ballad—universal sufferings—the dooty off heverythink—no hincome tax and no hincomes. As for the five p'int of the charter—I'm good for a gallon any day. Wot I ses is—"A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," I ses, so I never does nothink.

**Mrs. I.** I'll stand this no longer. I'll go to my room, put the things back in the box, go home at once, and never come and

see the wretches again ! I'll cut them off with a penny, and leave every farthing I've got to the Timbuctoo Toothpick Association.

**Exit L.**

**Span.** I can't keep it up much longer. These clothes, in which I have frequently performed the Wandering Minstrel to admiring audiences, have come in capitally ; but being in them I feel compelled to indulge in the ditty with which I delighted a bumper house on the occasion of my last benefit. Let me see, how does it go ?

SONG.—“ *Poor Susian.*”

'Twas near the Boro' Market that there dwelt a fine young man ;  
He fell in love with a damsel, which her name was Susian ;  
They always were a making love, just like a pair of spoons,  
Hall the mornings, hall the heven-ings, and hall the afternoons.

Well, matters had been going on like that a year or more,  
When Susian remarked one day “ My age is thirty-four,  
I feel as I am getting on, I am not a young gal,  
And I should very much like to know if your views is mat-ri-mo-ni-al.”

Says he, “ What is your property ? Though lucre I despise,  
But we cannot live on nothink, which to try would not be wise ;  
We're both on us got appetites, which satisfied must be,  
And we can't have proper dinners if we ain't got *proper-tea*.”

Says she, “ Oh, James, you've called me oft, ‘ My beautiful, my hown,’  
And said as how you did adore me for myself alone ;  
I give thee all—I can no more—as says one of the songs,  
I've got six pounds, a silvier watch, and a pair of sugiar tongs.”

Says he, “ 'Taint much considering how much purvission's riz,  
But we'll be married next Sunday three weeks as ever is ;  
The sweets of matrimony will improve life's bitter cup,  
Some folks would put *down* Sunday *hands*, I'll go and put them up.”

The three weeks flew like lightning, time run on rapid wheels,  
And James called on her hev'y day, and halways took his meals ;  
At last the happy day did come, a select partee of five  
Sat trembling in the vestry, but her James did not arrive.

Says she, “ Why don't he come ? Oh, dear, I thought to me he'd rush !  
I'm much afraid he's been run over by an hombli bush ;”  
When some one handed in a letter to the trembling bride,  
And these 'em ere's the 'artless words as written was inside.

“ Farewell ! for I was not aware, when first your form I sor,  
That you was thirty-four—you should have told me that afore ;  
I've spent your tin, I've sold the watch, the sugar tongs I've spouted,  
You would have been dear at the price, and so that's all about it.”

Now, at this sad intelligence, the friends did jeer and scoff,  
How Susian, poor thing, went on, and then, poor thing, went off;  
They all left—bride, likewise bridesmaids, the clerk, halso the minister,  
And as for Susian, poor dear, why she is still a spinister!

MORIAL.

Now all unmarried damsels who have a little pelf,  
You'd better see your property is settled on yourself;  
Take warning by poor Susian's sad tale of shameful wrongs,  
Stick to your tin, grab fast your watch, and always hold your tongs.

**Exit, R.**

MORIAL THE SECOND.

Says Susan's haunt one day, "What are you blubbering about?  
There is as good fish hin the sea has hever yet come hout;  
You'll find a lovier good as James, as handsome and as slim,  
So do be a *feel-loss-of-her*, and don't *feel loss of him*."

Whenever lovers turn away, and don't come back again,  
As is the case with treacherous and wacillating men,  
Look out and try and find a more appreciative man,  
And don't go in for spinsterhood, like Soozy—oozy—Ann! **Exit, R.**

**Enter** TOMPKINS, C., *holding up* WHIFFLES, *deplorably drunk*.

**Whif.** (*singing*) "She's all my fancy painted her—  
She's lovely—she's divine——"

(*hiccup*) Hold up, Tompkins, you're not holding up.

**Tom.** You're so lop-sided, I can't sir.

**Whif.** "Do not mingle." Hold up—I'm right, I am, ain't I,  
Tomkins—ain't I all right? If you say I ain't, I'll discharge you  
—now ain't I?

**Tom.** Oh, yes sir!

**Whif.** (*sings*) "Up rouse ye then, my merry, merry men,  
for 'tis our opening day."

(*business*) "Down among the dead men, let him lie."

(*falls*)

Awful fall in tea—let him lie!

**Tom.** But I can't let him lie. Oh, lor! get up, master! What  
a disgusting sight for a young man of my 'abits!

**Whif.** Tompkins!

**Tom.** Yes, sir.

**Whif.** Be off!

**Tom.** Yes, sir.

**Exit into shop**

**Whif.** (*rising*) I'm not drunk, am I? Echo answers—Very!  
I'm master here, and—oh, lor! I do feel so bad! (*takes bottle  
out of pocket*) I'm very ill, I am, I'm not so drunk as not to  
know that I'm——(*drinks*) "Behold how brightly breaks—"

breaks—(*hiccup*)—the morning." Take my advice, gentlemen, never mix your liquor. I mixed mine and—(*hiccup*)—here's the consequence. I don't know what I had, but this I do know—

"When the heart of a man is oppressed with care,  
The spell is dissolved should a woman appear."

**Mrs. I.** (*without*) Yes! not one moment longer will I stay!

**Whif.** Hallo! this is a woman! I'll get out of the way, for I ain't what the French call (*hiccup*) *kummy fo*.

(*goes into closet and shuts door*)

**Enter** MRS. INCUBUS, L.

**Mrs. I.** I'll teach them what it is to go out when a mother-in-law comes to see them, the ungrateful, good-for-nothing creatures!

(*going—meets SPANGLE.*)

**Enter** SPANGLE, R., *disguised as a policeman.*

**Span.** Stop!

**Mrs. I.** Hallo, policeman; if you'd been here half an hour ago you might have been of some use; but now you ain't wanted.

**Span.** But you are!

**Mrs. I.** Me?

**Span.** You, mum. You're a nice old gal you are, ain't you? a regular felonious, burglarious, housebreakerish, old 'oman—you are a nice Old Baileyish, Cold Bath Fields, House o' Correction'y creature. Come, confess your crime! I'm a policeman, I am, and don't stand no nonsense. Ha! ha!

(*strikes an attitude*)

**Mrs. I.** Why, you imperent, good-for-nothing wagabone, you—

**Span.** Wagabone? don't you so much as wag a finger! Call a constable a vagabond? malign one of Her Majesty's functionaries? Tremble! A smuggler has been here—ha!

**Mrs. I.** (*falls in chair*) Oh, 'eavens!

**Span.** Ha! you change color—the smuggler has confessed all; you are his accomplice—deny it not! You bought a piece of silk from him; own it! You are an offender against the law, and will suffer its awful penalty.

**Mrs. I.** Oh, good Mr. Policeman, I didn't know it was smuggled—I didn't know I was doing wrong! Oh, dear! oh, dear! what'll be done to me?

**Span.** You're sure to be transported for life among the gorillas; however, if you don't kill more than two jailers a week, they'll let you off with a ticket-of-leave.

**Mrs. I.** Oh, dear! oh dear! what would I give to be in Frumpton once more. Oh! Mr. Policeman, let me go, and I'll give you a five pound note.

**Span.** What ! attempt to bribe an *employé* of a liberal government ? Try to undermine the honor of a royal bobby ? Madam, you wound me, you do indeed !

**Mrs. I.** What am I to do ?

**Span.** Retire for a moment to your room, whilst I fetch a cab to convey you to Newgate.

**Mrs. I.** I don't know what I'm about ? **Exit L.**

**Span.** I can't keep it up much longer, I'll pack her off to the station in a cab, and— (*going*—HUNX heard without.)

**Hunx.** (*without*) Tell you he is here, so no nonsense !

**Span.** Hunx's voice, my remorseless landlord from Little Snodgrass, by all that's horrible ! Now impudence befriend me. (*stands in attitude.*)

**Enter HUNX, from C. door.**

**Hunx.** Saw him enter, I'll swear. Hollo ! a policeman. Ho ! my man have you seen anything of a gentleman called Spangle hereabouts ?

**Span.** (*with a wry face*) Spangle ! I've just been in communication with the rascal.

**Hunx.** The confounded rascal !

**Span.** Just so ; he's here.

**Hunx.** Said so.

**Span.** Beneath this very roof.

**Hunx.** Knew it !

**Span.** A word in your ear—*he's a she.*

**Hunx.** What d'ye mean, policeman ? I never joke ; don't like 'em.

**Span.** Spangle is in that room, dressed as a woman—an old woman.

**Hunx.** Tricky rascal !

**Span.** Deceptive vagabond ! yes ! knowing you were after him, he adopted the disguise most calculated to elude you. *He's there*, about to make his escape—wait here—on his appearance collar him ! If you want assistance I shall be without—hum !—you understand. He's wanted by the police ; you stop him ; I'll help and—we'll share the reward—hum !—fifty pounds—twenty-five each—hum ! (*aside*) He ! he ! he ! Who wouldn't be a mother-in-law ? **Exit into shop.**

**Hunx.** So he's wanted by the police too ! The scoundrel—but I'll show him no mercy—not a ha'porth—no, none.

**Enter MRS. INCUBUS, L.**

**Mrs. I.** Mr. Policeman, I'm so frightened and—Oh ! law, here's another nobleman !

**Hunx.** Well 'pon my life, you're a pretty sort of person, you are. Now tell me, ain't you ashamed of yourself ? (*aside*)

Wonderful deception. I shouldn't ha' known him—so much stouter too—crinoline will account for that! (*aloud*) You're discovered, young man, so come along. (*seizes her*)

**Mrs. I.** Young man? What d'ye mean? I'm no young man—I'm an old woman!

**Hunx.** Very likely, I know better, Mr. Spangle. Come on, you play-acting rascal! come on! (*MRS. INCUBUS shrieks.*)

**Enter MRS. WHIFFLES, R.**

**Mrs. W.** My dear ma!—and in the hand of a rude man? Take that! (*strikes HUNX on the hat.*)

**Hunx.** (*gets L.*) If you were only a man, ma'am—

**Mrs. W.** Oh, if my dear husband were only present. Oh, Sampson, Sampson, where are you?

**SAMPSON** *throws open door—is discovered drunk, with an immense number of candles hung round him, cake of soap in waistcoat pocket, preserves all over his mouth.*

**Whif.** Here—here, madam! and why are you here?—tell me that. Why ain't you at your cousin Mary's?—What business have you to come back before you're sent for? Tell me that, ma'am—tell me that.

**Mrs. W.** Can it be possible! What do you mean, sir?

**Whif.** Oh, come! you don't bully me any longer—I'm going to have my innings now, I can tell you. From this day forth, I'll be master of my own house, and my own till, and my own actions; so if you don't choose to submit as a wife should, why go and live with your mother, and good riddance to bad rubbish, say I.

**Hunx.** Hear, hear, hear! (*SPANGLE watching.*)

**Mrs. W.** Sampson, are you dreaming?

**Enter SPANGLE.**

**Span.** No, ma'am, he's just woke up.

**Mrs. W.** Mr. Spangle! (*crosses to R. C.—MR. and MRS. WHIFFLES converse.*)

**Hunx.** Mr. Spangle! why, sir, I've been looking for you for the last—

**Span.** That's odd! you might have seen me last night. (*crosses to HUNX*)

**Hunx.** Why, sir, I was last night at a public meeting.

**Span.** Meeting at a public you mean; wasn't that last waltz delicious? (*dancing him round*) However, Mrs. Hunx shall not know anything from me. No, I'm dumb, you dog.

**Hunx.** Hang me! if I'm not in a fog.

**Mrs. I.** I'll cut 'em both off with a shilling.

**Span.** Never mind that, ma'am, so long as you cut off yourself.

**Mrs. W.** Will you explain all this, sir ?

**Span.** Certainly not, my dear madam, never explain anything at the end of a farce, it's always a bore.

**Whif.** So it is. But Timothy, you must stop with us ; you shan't go.

**Span.** Shan't I ? then I won't (*to audience*) That's to say, if you'll allow me to stay. Say a kind word for Timothy Spangle, and if you do, he doesn't care how often he may be called to show you HOW TO TAME YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW.

SPANGLE.

MRS. W.

MRS. I.

MR. W.

HUNX.

CURTAIN.



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